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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6881
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 004627

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF, AF/S, AF/EPS, EB/IFD/ODF, EB/TPP/ODC
TREASURY FOR ED BARBER, GRACE SONE, AND HOFFMAN BARAK
USDOC FOR 2037/ERIC HENDERSON
STATE PASS USTR/RWHITTAKER
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/17/05
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: NEW HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER IS STILL FIGHTING
GUERRILLA STRUGGLE THROUGH LAND REFORM

REF: HARARE 3910

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MCDONALD, REASON 1.5 (B), (D)

SUMMARY

1. (C) IN A MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON AUGUST 16, NEW HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER -- AND ZANU-PF CHAIRMAN -- JOHN NKOMO PROVIDED A CONFUSING AND SOMETIMES CONTRADICTORY ACCOUNT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NEXT STEPS ON LAND REFORM. HIS COMMENTS CONFIRMED THE CLEAR ABSENCE OF ANY SYSTEMATIC RESETTLEMENT PLAN. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT OLD GUARD MEMBERS LIKE NKOMO ARE CONTINUING TO FIGHT THE GUERRILLA STRUGGLE AGAINST WHITES THROUGH LAND REFORM. ACCORDING TO NKOMO, ALL 3,000 FARMS IDENTIFIED FOR SEIZURE WOULD BE GAZETTED BY AUGUST 18 (ALTHOUGH WE WERE INFORMED SUBSEQUENTLY BY THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION THAT THIS DID NOT OCCUR), BUT THERE MIGHT BE A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL LAND IN THE FUTURE. OWNERS OF FARMS WILL HAVE 30 DAYS TO APPEAL AND, IF SUCCESSFUL, WILL BE TAKEN OFF THE LIST. NKOMO AGREES THAT PRODUCTIVE FARMS SHOULD BE REMOVED. OTHER FARMS WOULD THEN HAVE TO BE IDENTIFIED.

12. (C) NKOMO DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF SIGNIFICANT
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LAWLESSNESS ON COMMERCIAL FARMS, AND REITERATED THAT THE WAR VETERANS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN WHERE THEY ARE PROVIDED THEY DO NOT ENGAGE IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY. ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT FARM OCCUPATIONS WERE CAUSING ECONOMIC DAMAGE, NKOMO INSISTED THAT SOME DISRUPTIONS MAY BE NECESSARY TO CORRECT THE INJUSTICE OF CURRENT LAND OWNERSHIP. NKOMO CALLED THE NEW PARLIAMENT "AMATEURS" AND DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF FACTIONS WITHIN CABINET. THE EMBASSY HAD A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH NKOMO WHEN HE WAS MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING, AND WE INTEND TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE DIALOGUE WITH HIM IN HIS NEW PORTFOLIO. WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY DEPARTURES FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S DISASTROUS POLICIES, INCLUDING ON LAND, AND LIKELY WILL SEE MORE OF THE SAME IN RURAL AREAS. END SUMMARY.

CONSTRUCTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP

13. (C) THE AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY POLOFFS, CALLED

AUGUST 16 ON NEW HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER, AND ZANU-PF CHAIRMAN, JOHN NKOMO. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD ENJOYED WORKING WITH NKOMO IN HIS PREVIOUS POSITION AS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING MINISTER, AND HE LOOKED FORWARD TO CONTINUING A PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AT HOME AFFAIRS.

CONFUSING NEXT STEPS ON LAND

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14. (C) THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN THAT THE VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION ON COMMERCIAL FARMS HAD CONTINUED IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE JUNE ELECTIONS, AND ASKED WHAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO DO ABOUT IT. NKOMO BEGAN BY CLAIMING THAT THE 3,000 FARM FIGURE WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE AMOUNT OF LAND TO BE TRANSFERRED AS AGREED AT THE SEPTEMBER 1998 DONORS CONFERENCE. 804 FARMS, HE SAID, HAD ALREADY BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR RESETTLEMENT, AND THE REMAINING APPROXIMATELY 2200 WOULD BE GAZETTED ON AUGUST 18. (NOTE: WE WERE SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED BY THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION ON AUGUST 21 THAT NO FARMS WERE GAZETTED ON AUGUST 18. 229 FARMS WERE IDENTIFIED FOR SEIZURE IN THE GOVERNMENT-INFLUENCED NEWSPAPER "THE HERALD," BUT HAVE NOT YET BEEN LISTED IN THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT GAZETTE. END NOTE.) NKOMO CLAIMED THAT ALL OWNERS HAVE 30 DAYS TO APPEAL; PRODUCTIVE FARMS SHOULD BE TAKEN OFF THE LIST. ASKED WHETHER NEW FARMS WOULD THEN HAVE TO BE IDENTIFIED, NKOMO SAID YES, BUT A NEW PROCESS WOULD BE REQUIRED. HE ADDED CRYPTICALLY THAT THE GOVERNMENT LIKELY WOULD ALLOW SOME FARMERS TO STAY ON THEIR FARMS FOR SEVERAL YEARS, BUT WOULD TELL THEM THAT THEIR LAND WOULD BE ACQUIRED AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT SUCH AN ILLEGAL, UNCLEAR AND INCONSISTENT APPROACH CREATED SIGNIFICANT ANXIETY AMONG FARMERS AND WREAKED HAVOC ON THE ECONOMY.

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6882
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 004627

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF, AF/S, AF/EPS, EB/IFD/ODF, EB/TPP/ODC
TREASURY FOR ED BARBER, GRACE SONE, AND HOFFMAN BARAK
USDOC FOR 2037/ERIC HENDERSON
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15. (C) THE AMBASSADOR ASKED ABOUT THE PROPOSAL OF THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU) TO SELL FARMS IN PHASES OVER SEVERAL YEARS. NKOMO REPLIED THAT HE WAS IN DAILY CONTACT WITH THE CFU, WHICH HAD OFFERED TO RELINQUISH 200 FARMS NOW, AND OTHER FARMS IN BETWEEN PLANTING SEASONS. HE PROVIDED NO ADDITIONAL DETAILS ABOUT THE CFU PROPOSAL, WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTERIAL GROUP OVERSEEING THE FAST-TRACK RESETTLEMENT EFFORT.

VIOLENCE? WHAT VIOLENCE?

16. (C) NOTING THAT THE EMBASSY IS RECEIVING MANY REPORTS OF CONTINUING FARM VIOLENCE, THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHEN PRESIDENT MUGABE PLANNED TO ORDER THE WAR VETERANS OFF THE FARMS. THE PRESIDENT WOULD NOT, NKOMO REPLIED. HE HIMSELF WAS DEALING WITH THE VETERANS. IN FACT, HE HAD MET WITH THEM IN HIS OFFICE ON AUGUST 13. SO LONG AS THEY ARE NOT ENGAGING IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, THEY WILL BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN ON THE FARMS. HE DISAGREED THAT THERE WAS WIDESPREAD LAWLESSNESS, INSISTING THAT "MALICIOUS PEOPLE" WERE THE SOURCE OF SUCH REPORTS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED ONLY THE EXISTENCE OF "CRIMINAL ELEMENTS"

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WHO HAD TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION, BUT INSISTED THEY WOULD BE ARRESTED WHEN IDENTIFIED. THE WAR VETERANS HAD BEEN TOLD TO BE PREPARED TO MOVE TO LAND IDENTIFIED FOR THEM AS SOON AS THEY RECEIVED THE WORD, BUT NKOMO COULD NOT SAY WHEN THAT WOULD HAPPEN. NKOMO THOUGHT THE QUESTION OF LAWLESSNESS AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY HAD BEEN ADDRESSED ADEQUATELY. THE GOVERNMENT WAS CERTAINLY TRYING ITS BEST.

17. THE AMBASSADOR STRONGLY DISAGREED THAT THE PROBLEM HAD BEEN RESOLVED. HE SAID THAT THE VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION WERE WRONG AND MUST BE STOPPED BY THE GOZ. HE HAD TRAVELLED PERSONALLY TO AREAS AFFECTED BY LAND-RELATED VIOLENCE, AND REPORTS OF VIOLENCE FROM RELIABLE SOURCES WERE CONTINUING. THE AMBASSADOR AND OTHERS HAVE THAT PERCEPTION, NKOMO SAID, BECAUSE THEY HEAR FROM PEOPLE LIKE CFU OFFICIAL DAVID HASLUCK, WHOSE NEGATIVE RHETORIC MADE THE SITUATION WORSE. TURNING EMOTIONAL, NKOMO SAID ANGRILY THAT HE HAD FOUGHT IN THE INDEPENDENCE WAR AND SUSTAINED INJURIES IN ORDER TO GET THE VOTE, AND HAD LOST EVERYTHING IN THE PROCESS. THE FARMERS WERE THE ONES HE HAD FOUGHT AGAINST AND WHO HAD LOCKED HIM UP DURING THE COLONIAL DAYS. HIS FATHER HAD BEEN FORCED OFF HIS LAND BY WHITES EARLY LAST CENTURY.

DISRUPTIONS NECESSARY TO CORRECT INJUSTICE

18. (C) WAS NKOMO CONCERNED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE LAWLESSNESS? YES, HE REPLIED, BUT IT WAS

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ACCEPTABLE BECAUSE IT WAS IMPORTANT TO CORRECT A GLARING INJUSTICE. WHEN A WHITE FARMER HAS 20,000 HECTARES OF LAND ACROSS A FENCE FROM BLACK ZIMBABWEANS HUDDLED IN CONGESTED POVERTY, "THE SITUATION MUST BE PUT RIGHT," NKOMO SAID. IT IS ONLY HUMANE TO ADDRESS THIS DISCREPANCY, AND SOME DISRUPTIONS MAY BE UNAVOIDABLE ALONG THE WAY. THE MINISTER WAS INCREDULOUS AT THE NERVE OF IAN SMITH, WHO HE SAID CALLS HIM EVERY DAY ABOUT THE STATUS OF HIS FARM. HE CRITICIZED WHITE FARMERS FOR BEING TOO HARDLINE AND REFUSING TO ACCEPT ANY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS. EVINCING SIGNIFICANT DISLIKE FOR CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE WHITE COMMUNITY, NKOMO INSISTED THAT ONE COULD NOT "TEACH OLD DOGS NEW TRICKS." THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS HAD DRAGGED THEIR FEET OVER THE YEARS, BUT THE GOVERNMENT ALSO HAD ITS HARDLINERS. NKOMO REPLIED THAT PERHAPS IT IS AN ADVANTAGE TO HAVE THEM, AS THEY REMIND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NATURE OF THE "OTHER SIDE." HE URGED THE UNITED STATES TO LET ZIMBABWE RESOLVE THIS ISSUE ON ITS OWN.

BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

19. (C) FRIENDSHIP, THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT, IS A TWO-WAY STREET. AS FRIENDS OF ZIMBABWE, THE UNITED STATES WANTED TO EXPRESS ITS CONCERNS, AND WE EXPECTED ZIMBABWE

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6883
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 HARARE 004627

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GUERRILLA STRUGGLE THROUGH LAND REFORM

TO DO THE SAME. THE AMBASSADOR WAS CONCERNED, THOUGH, BY
RECENT ANTI-AMERICAN RHETORIC FROM GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS,
PROMPTED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS' CONSIDERATION OF THE
ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY ACT (ZDA). THE ZDA IS EVIDENCE OF
CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE,
AND THE EMBASSY SHARES THAT CONCERN. THE AMBASSADOR
EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD DISCUSS
OUR DIFFERENCES CONSTRUCTIVELY. NKOMO TERMED THE ZDA
"UNFORTUNATE," BUT AGREED WITH THE AMBASSADOR'S POINT.

PARLIAMENT AND CABINET

[10](#). (C) NKOMO DESCRIBED PARLIAMENT AS A "BUNCH OF
AMATEURS." THAT WAS THE CASE ON BOTH SIDES, BUT HE ADDED
THAT HE AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS HAD ALL BEGUN THEIR
POLITICAL CAREERS AT THE SAME STAGE. HE CRITICIZED THE
NEW MPS FOR FOCUSING THEIR EFFORTS ON PERSONAL ATTACKS
RATHER THAN ISSUES. NKOMO DENIED THAT THE CABINET HAD
SPLIT INTO FACTIONS, CLAIMING THAT CABINET MEMBERS WERE
UNITED IN THEIR DESIRE TO GET ZIMBABWE BACK ON THE RIGHT
TRACK.

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COMMENT

[11](#). (C) THE EMBASSY HAD A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH
NKOMO WHEN HE WAS MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND WE
INTEND TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE DIALOGUE WITH HIM. AS A
SENIOR MINISTER AND PARTY CHAIRMAN, HE WILL CONTINUE TO
BE AN IMPORTANT INTERLOCUTOR FOR THE MISSION. WE SHOULD
NOT EXPECT ANY DEPARTURES FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT
MISGUIDED POLICIES, HOWEVER. NKOMO IS A ZANU-PF STALWART
WHO TOES THE PARTY LINE ON LAND REFORM AND OTHER KEY
ISSUES. HIS CONFUSING, SOMETIMES CONTRADICTIONARY COMMENTS
ON LAND CONFIRMED THE CLEAR ABSENCE OF ANY SYSTEMATIC
RESETTLEMENT PLAN. JUDGING FROM NKOMO'S COMMENTS, THE
GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION OF MOVING THE WAR VETERANS
OFF THE FARMS IN THE NEAR TERM NOR OF SERIOUSLY
ADDRESSING THE HAVOC THEY ARE WREAKING IN RURAL AREAS AND
IN UNDERMINING THE ECONOMY. NKOMO'S ATTITUDE ON LAND
REFORM IS SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED BY LINGERING
RESENTMENT AGAINST THE WHITE FARMERS AS WELL AS, WE
BELIEVE, THE CALCULATION THAT THIS IS A WINNING POLITICAL
ISSUE FOR ZANU-PF.

MCDONALD

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